Numismatic Guaranty Corporation

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By Peter Anthony
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Chicago International Coin Fair Auction Results
Sales of ancient coins generated more than $5.25 million at the CICF auction, hosted by Heritage Auctions.
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ANA Announces Coin Recovery from 2007 Museum Theft
An 1863 US Indian Cent Pattern has been recovered seven years after its 2007 theft from the Edward C. Rochette Money Museum. Collectors who may have bought other stolen coins are encouraged to contact the ANA.
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Numismatist Frank Van Valen is celebrating 25 years as a Red Book contributor.
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NGC Announces Revised Services and Fees

Posted on 4/29/2014

The updated services and fees are effective May 1 and June 1. New submission forms will be available soon.

NGC has announced a few service and fee changes for regular US and world coin submissions. The following modifications to select grading and service tiers are now being introduced.

Effective May 1, 2014:

- **US and World Modern** and **Modern Special Tiers** – Maximum value limit (per coin) is changed to $1,000.
- **Gold Rush Tier** – Modern gold and platinum bullion coins are no longer eligible for the Gold Rush tier. Please select a tier based on maximum value limit and desired turnaround time.

Effective June 1, 2014:

- **Economy Tier** (US Coins only) – Fee changed to $18
- **Modern Tier** (US Coins only) – Fee changed to $15
- **Modern Special Tier** (World Coins only) – Fee changed to $22
- **Economy / Value Tier and Early Bird / Standard Tier** - Add $5 for Early Releases and First Releases designations. This fee is included in Modern Special, Express and Walkthrough tiers.
- **Designation Review** – Maximum coin value of $10,000. Coins valued over $10,000 should be submitted under the ReGrade service and an applicable grading tier.

An updated submission form reflecting these changes will be available in late May. All coins shipped to NGC after May 31, 2014, should be accompanied by the

new submission form. Note: US and world coins must still be submitted on separate forms.

Submissions to International Submission Centers are not affected.

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United States

NGC Grades Extremely Rare 1876 Fractional Gold Piece

Posted on 5/13/2014

The 1876 Octagonal California Fractional Gold 25 Cent BG-799GG variety features a reverse that was unknown until 2009.

NGC has certified the second known example of the 1876 Octagonal California Fractional Gold 25 Cents BG-799GG variety. This extremely rare variety was undiscovered until 2009 and a second piece was subsequently identified. The second specimen is graded NGC MS 65 PL

California Fractional Gold pieces were privately minted by jewelers and other merchants in 25 cent, 50 cent and one dollar denominations starting in 1852. By 1858 these pieces were likely no longer needed for circulation, but new varieties were struck as souvenirs of the California Gold Rush.

NGC attributes these issues by “BG” number after Walter Breen and Ronald J. Gillio’s *California Fractional Gold* reference book. Unlisted in that catalog, BG-799GG shares an obverse with varieties BG-799A through BG-799D, but features a previously unknown reverse. This rare reverse die is distinguished by the recutting on the “D” of “DOLLAR” and has a unique leaf pattern. Both BG-799GG examples have a significantly rotated reverse.

1876 Octagonal California Fractional Gold 25 Cents BG-799GG
Click images to enlarge.

The maker of this California Fractional Gold piece was Christopher Ferdinand Mohrig of San Francisco, the minter of other varieties listed as BG-790 through BG-799V. Mohrig was arrested by the Secret Service on August 10, 1876 for violating a 1864 law outlawing privately issued coinage. His dies and inventory of coins were confiscated and ultimately destroyed, which explains the rarity of several varieties of coins struck by Mohrig.

In a series as vast as California Fractional Gold, there still exist opportunities to discover new varieties or locate rare specimens. The thrill of the hunt only adds to the excitement of this diverse and historically significant group of coins.

1876 Octagonal California Fractional Gold 25 Cents BG-799GG
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United States

NGC Grades Unique 2010 John Lennon Gold 5 Pound

Posted on 5/13/2014

NGC has certified a PF 69 Ultra Cameo gold striking of the Alderney 2010 John Lennon 5 Pound coin.

In 2010 the Royal Mint allowed the public to vote for a famous Briton to be featured on a coin as part of its “Great Britons” commemorative series, which was started in 2006. John Lennon was chosen with 92% of the votes. Only 5,000 silver pieces were struck. The Royal Mint also produced a unique gold version of the coin that was presented to the John Lennon Estate and received by Yoko Ono.

This unique coin was auctioned off for the Alder Hey charity’s Imagine Appeal to benefit the Alder Hey Children’s Hospital in Liverpool, England. The coin was sold by Bonhams for £72,000 (US $121,500) in 2010. It has not been sold publicly since then, and in May 2014 it was submitted to NGC.

NGC has graded this unique modern rarity PF 69 Ultra Cameo.

Alderney 2010 John Lennon 5 Pound NGC PF 69 Ultra Cameo
Click images to enlarge.

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NGC Registry News

Posted on 5/13/2014

Check out the newest US and world sets added to the NGC Registry.

The NGC Registry has revealed some exciting new US sets in correlation with recent releases from the US Mint:

- America the Beautiful Bullion Coins: 2014 America the Beautiful 5 Ounce Coins, Mint State
- America the Beautiful Bullion Coins: 2014 P America the Beautiful 5 Ounce Coins, Specimen
- US Commemoratives: Modern Commemorative Half Dollars, 1982-Date, Mint State
- US Commemoratives: Modern Commemorative Half Dollars, 1982-Date, Proof
- US Commemoratives: Modern Gold and Platinum Commemoratives, 1984-Date, Proof

We are working to create other new NGC Registry World sets. Review the new world set releases, below, to see if there is a collecting option that interests you:

- Canada - Commemorative: Silver $4, Heroes of the War of 1812, 2012-2013, Proof
- Canada - Commemorative: Silver $20, Crystal Snowflakes Series, 2007-2012, Proof
- Canada - Commemorative: Silver $20, Legend of Nanaboozhoo, 2014, Proof
- China - Panda: Gold 5 Ounce Panda, 1987-Date, Proof
- China - Panda: Panda Anniversary Issues
- Finland: European Silver Commemoratives, 2002-2012, Mint State
- Finland: European Silver Commemoratives, 2002-2012, Proof
- Mexico: Silver Peso, 1869-1873, Circulation Issue
- Mexico: Silver Peso, 1898-1909, Circulation Issue

- Peru: Silver Sol, 1923-1935, Circulation Issue
- South Africa - Republic: 1961 Proof Set
- South Africa - Republic: 1962 Proof Set
- South Africa - Republic: 1963 Proof Set
- South Africa - Republic: 1964 Proof Set
- South Africa - Republic: 1965 Proof Set
- Spain: Segovia Mint 500th Anniversary, 2001, Complete Proof

Start your collection now and you could be a participant in the 2014 NGC Registry Awards. Just take a look at the categories that interest you and start your own collection in the Registry. If you're not familiar with the NGC Registry take some time to explore it, and see the many collecting options that are available.

We have been busy adding the 2014 slots to the new sets. Do you own a coin that still needs a slot in the Registry? If so, please shoot us an email, and let us know. We are happy to add it for you. If you don't see the set categories that interest you, drop us a note and let us know. Reach us by e-mail at registry@NGCcoin.com. We look forward to seeing your coin collection in the 2014 NGC Registry competition.

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Submit Coins to NGC at Long Beach

Posted on 5/21/2014

NGC will be accepting submissions at booth #431 at the Long Beach Expo. Stop by to drop off your coins and chat with our team!

NGC will be accepting regular submissions for all service levels* at the Long Beach Expo, at the Long Beach Convention Center in Long Beach, CA from Thursday, June 5 to noon on Saturday, June 7, 2014. **Saturday cut-off time may change due to submission volumes.** Check with representatives at the NGC booth for details including any changes to the Saturday cut-off time.

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All submissions will be sent to our office in Sarasota, FL. Services include World Services, Ancient Coin Services, Bulk, PHOTO PROOF® and more.

Note:

- Due to the special handling required, NGC does not accept submissions of the following coins at this show for regular service submissions to be returned to the NGC offices: Coins over 3.5" (90 mm) in diameter and .39" (10 mm) in depth, 2014 Baseball Hall of Fame Commemoratives, 2013 American Buffalo One Ounce Gold Reverse Proof, West Point 2-coin set, San Francisco 2-coin Proof set, Coin & Currency sets, 25th Anniversary Eagles, 20th Anniversary Eagles, Early/First Releases, American Liberty Series and 10th Anniversary Platinum Sets. These submissions must be sent directly to Sarasota, FL, by the submitter.
- *Does not include 5-ounce coins.

Questions should be directed to NGC customer service at service@NGCcoin.com or 1-800-NGC-COIN (642-2646).

Visit our table for answers to any questions about the services offered by NGC. Please remember that NGC does not provide opinions or free evaluations of coins at trade shows.

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United States

NGC Accepting Submissions at Whitman Baltimore Expo

Posted on 5/13/2014

Stop by the NGC booth (#1306) at the Whitman Baltimore Expo to drop off your grading submissions.

NGC will be accepting regular submissions for all service levels* at the Whitman Baltimore Expo, at the Baltimore Convention Center in Baltimore, MD from Thursday, June 26 to noon on Saturday, June 28, 2014. **Saturday cut-off time may change due to submission volumes.** Check with representatives at the NGC booth for details including any changes to the Saturday cut-off time.

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All submissions will be sent to our office in Sarasota, FL. Services include World Services, Ancient Coin Services, Bulk, PHOTO PROOF® and more.

Note:

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United States

NGC Ancients: Egyptian Gold Coinage

Posted on 5/19/2014

This month, NGC Ancients looks at the gold coinage of ancient Egypt.

The coinage of ancient Egypt reveals a strong preference for gold. Interestingly, gold seems to have been more plentiful in Egypt than most anywhere else in the Mediterranean and the Near East (except, perhaps, Macedon), while silver was comparatively scarce and usually had to be imported. The source of this gold was to the south in the Kingdom of Kush, a sub-Saharan empire of the Nile Valley.

The first gold coins of Egypt were struck by two of the last Pharaohs. One of these issues, which was modeled after the familiar types of Athens, is known by a single piece in the British Museum. A larger and more familiar gold coinage was struck under Nectanebo II (360-343 BC), the last of the native pharaohs.

When the Macedonian King Alexander III entered Egypt late in 332 BC, he established a mint which may have been located at Memphis. The Greek king's stay in Egypt was brief, but a great quantity of coins bearing his name was later struck by his regent and his successors in Egypt after his departure. This gold stater, bearing Alexander's standard types, the head of Athena on the obverse and Nike on the reverse, was struck after his death at the mint of Memphis or Alexandria. After Alexander died at Babylon in 323 B.C., his vast empire was partitioned by his successors - among them was Ptolemy I, who ruled Egypt, initially using the title of satrap, and later, king. In the early period after Alexander's death, Ptolemy continued to issue gold staters of Alexander's type that bore the deceased king's name.

The first important break in tradition occurred sometime between 304 and 295 BC, when Ptolemy I issued gold staters with his own portrait and with inscriptions that described him as king. The reverse of these staters show the deified Alexander III riding in a chariot drawn by four elephants, an important image since Ptolemy's legitimacy was directly tied to Alexander. From this point onward Ptolemaic gold coinage assumed a dynastic flavor and was issued by a long succession of kings from the royal family.

The most remarkable aspects of Ptolemaic gold coinage are the variety of the issues, the quantities in which they were struck, and the heavy weight of their most common denomination, the octodrachm (an eight-drachm coin). This octodrachm, thought to have been struck sometime in the mid-third century, is an exceptional example of one of the rarer Egyptian gold coins. The obverse is graced by a portrait of Queen Berenice II, wife of King Ptolemy III, while the reverse shows a cornucopia and fillet. In addition, other large denominations were struck, notably the tetradrachm (four drachms), the pentadrachm (five drachms).

Most Ptolemaic gold coins show the portraits of members of the royal family, both living and deceased. Though in some cases the identities of these portraits are still a matter of debate, it would seem the list includes the Kings Ptolemy I, II, III, IV and V, and the Queens Arsinoe II & III, Berenice I (& II?) and Cleopatra I. This gold octodrachm depicts Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II on the obverse, and their ancestors Ptolemy I and Berenice I on the reverse.

The final coinage requiring special mention was issued in the name of the late King Ptolemy III (246-222 B.C.). Like all deceased Ptolemaic royal subjects, he is portrayed as a god. In this case, however, he is identified with more than one deity, for he wears the radiate crown of the sun-god Helios, the aegis of Zeus, and rests on his shoulder the trident of the sea-god Poseidon. With this ornate portrait, Ptolemy III is identified

with the most powerful gods who ruled the heavens, the sky, the land and the sea.

Interested in reading more articles on Ancient coins? Click here

Images courtesy of CNG

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United States

Counterfeit Detection: Altered Cameo 1960 Franklin Half Dollar

Posted on 5/16/2014

A white "frost" was applied to this Franklin Half Dollar to give its elements a cameo appearance.

There are a number of ways that nefarious individuals alter coins in an attempt to trick unsuspecting buyers into thinking that the coin is better than it really is. These tactics often involve adding a mintmark to or altering the date of a common coin so that it appears to be a rare issue. They also include a variety of methods used to make the coin appear to be a higher grade.

Among the most common of these methods are polishing, improper cleaning, and whizzing—the process of using a fast-rotating wire brush to manipulate a circulated coin into appearing Mint State. Details are occasionally re-engraved; for example, there are sometimes attempts to use a tool to sharpen the stars on 19th century US coins or the head of a Standing Liberty quarter.

A far less common tactic, but perhaps more deceptive because it is seldom seen, is to apply white “frost” to a coin’s design elements to give it a Cameo or Ultra Cameo appearance. In many series, Cameo or Ultra Cameo coins are highly elusive and sell for a significant premium.

NGC graders identified an artificial Cameo effect on this 1960 Franklin Half Dollar. Looking closely, the white “frost” extends beyond the design elements and into the fields. This is particularly evident around the entire Liberty Bell, to the left of the U in UNITED, and by the R in LIBERTY. When this effect is created artificially it is virtually impossible to mimic the exactness of a Cameo appearance that naturally occurs from the minting process.

Altered Cameo 1960 Franklin Half
Click images to enlarge.

A 1960 Half Dollar in NGC PF 67 is worth $55 according to the NGC US Coin Price Guide, while a 1960 Half Dollar in NGC PF 67 Cameo is worth $175. In PF 67 Ultra Cameo, the value increases significantly to $650. With this potential upside, a disreputable person may attempt to artificially enhance the cameo appearance.

Familiarity with the different methods used to deceptively alter a coin is the best defense. By studying altered pieces and comparing them to their genuine counterparts, it becomes much easier to spot a coin that looks unnatural.

Interested in reading more articles on Counterfeit Detection? Click here.

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USA Coin Album: Our Shrinking Coins

Posted on 5/13/2014

No, our coins aren't shrinking in the strictest sense. The dime is still 17.9 mm in diameter, and the quarter retains the 24.3 mm diameter it has possessed since the 1830s. What has shrunk over time are the design features on each coin.

Just as JFK's stature as president has diminished over the past 50 years, so too has the size of his head on the half dollar. The same fate has befallen Lincoln, Jefferson, Roosevelt and Washington. To be fair, it's hard to compare the portraits from 1938 Jefferson nickels and 1932 Washington quarters with those used today, since they've both been extensively revised to accommodate new reverse types. Still, the last usage of Felix Schlag's 1938 bust in 2004 reveals that Jefferson, too, had lost his swelled head at the hands of US Mint sculptor/engravers some years previous.

Why were such changes made? The answer lies in shifting priorities in the face of dramatically rising mintages since 1960. The serious coin shortage of the early 1960s, which prompted the resumption of coining at San Francisco in 1965 and around-the-clock operations at all three mints, also highlighted the fact that dies were wearing out rapidly and being replaced too often to sustain such uninterrupted work. It was also obvious to anyone looking at our coins that the master hubs had lost considerable detail. This was particularly evident in the obverse of the Lincoln cent and both sides of the Jefferson nickel. The US Mint's solution was to greatly reduce both the relief and size of central design elements for these two most troublesome coins. This work commenced as soon as the coin shortage abated in 1967 and Engraving Department employees finally had the time to address the problem.

First up was the cent. Since its debut in 1909 the Lincoln cent's obverse had deteriorated so badly that the president's beard no longer showed any whiskers. Instead, he seemed to have a massive tumor on his jaw. Repeated hub raisings and die sinkings had worn away all details of the bust and had even enlarged it slightly to occupy more of the coin's field. Erosion of the master matrices had also driven LIBERTY and IN GOD WE TRUST up against the coin's borders, and this led to more frequent chipping of the working dies. Even the date was moving ever closer to the border.

An entirely new master hub was created for the obverse of 1969's cent coinage. This featured a smaller bust of greatly lowered relief. In addition, the date and lettering were given a broader and more delicate font to reduce the likelihood of die chipping and filling. They were also moved away from the border. Further changes were made to the cent's master hubs, most noticeably in 1974, 1982, 1984 and 1992. Since 1992 the cent's obverse has had a rather cartoonish appearance entirely unlike the sculpted work of Victor D. Brenner's original. The Mint, however, has achieved its desired result of producing hundreds of thousands more coins per die and nearly eliminating notable die breaks. The only losers have been admirers of true numismatic art.

The Jefferson nickel underwent its first significant facelift in 1971 (the addition of designer's initials FS in 1966 was made to the existing matrix). As with the cent, both the size and relief of the bust were reduced to extend die life, and the peripheral legends were moved away from the borders. Similar reductions were made to the coin's reverse. Only minor changes were made over the next 15+ years, and it was not until 1989 that a series of radical relief reductions began to rob the Schlag portrait of all its vitality. Beginning in 1994 the Mint eliminated any real sense of three-dimensional art, while simultaneously shrinking the overall scale of the design within the coin's field.

Similar changes have been made to the dime since the 1990s, and the bust of President Roosevelt has shrunken dramatically. This coin was always troublesome for the Mint, as both the date and IN GOD WE TRUST were too close to the border from the outset, often leaving these features somewhat shallow and indistinct near the coin's rim. But it's the mighty half dollar that has suffered the most from well-intentioned tinkering. The first copper-nickel-clad edition of 1971 had a greatly reduced portrait from the 1964-70 issues, but it was not until 1995 that the most egregious changes were effected. Kennedy's bust was shrunk to its present size, and he was given the much maligned "spaghetti hair" that seems to have been a US Mint staple during that decade (this term refers to the noodle-like quality of the thick hair strands). Comparing a half dollar

of 2013 to one dated 1964-70 is to weep for the lost artistry.

A backlash of sorts occurred with the quarter dollar, as collectors commented so unfavorably toward the spaghetti hair that George Washington had displayed since the 1990s. For the current America the Beautiful series the Mint created a new obverse master hub which drew upon John Flanagan's original 1932 bust for inspiration. Naturally, the relief has to be lower for modern coinage needs, but gone now are the ludicrous noodles, and the portrait is much more satisfying.

David W. Lange's column, "USA Coin Album," appears monthly in the Numismatist, *the official publication of the American Numismatic Association.*

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World Coins: Counterfeit Cuba 1915 Silver Peso

Posted on 5/19/2014

While poor-quality counterfeit Cuban peso coins have been produced and sold at flea markets for years, this is the first high-quality counterfeit of the Cuban 1915 Silver Peso we've seen.

A high-quality counterfeit of a Cuba 1915 Silver Peso submitted to NGC is a recent production. While Cuban counterfeit coins are not new, this coin, like many recent Chinese counterfeits, has been produced by the transfer die method. The danger in this piece is that it lacks many repeating depressions as they appear to have been removed at some point in production.

Counterfeit Cuba 1915 Silver Peso
Left to Right: Coin 1 Obverse; Coin 2 Obverse; Coin 3 Obverse
Click images to enlarge.

The Cuban 1915 Silver Peso coins were products of the United States Mint. Authentic pieces exhibit manufacturing standards consistent with other coins minted by the United States. These counterfeits, however, lack the luster and surfaces that genuine Cuban 1915 Silver Pesos exhibit, but they are also struck in silver.

Counterfeit Cuba 1915 Silver Peso
Left to Right: Coin 1 Reverse; Coin 2 Reverse; Coin 3 Reverse
Click images to enlarge.

Unlike many other transfer die counterfeits coming from China, these Cuban fakes appear to have had most of the contact marks removed from the transfer die before production. There are still a number of issues that serve as diagnostics, including raised die lines, a few repeating marks, and various other transfer die defects. On the obverse, the key diagnostics are two raised "spikes" through the top of the “T” in “LIBERTAD”. There are also repeating marks that were on the host coin that were not removed before production of these counterfeits. There is a hit on the “I” of “PATRIA” as well as a few repeaters on the star in the center. The reverse shows a slight weakness and blurriness to the leaves to the right of the shield and on the shield from being transferred. There is also a depressed line on the top of the fasces. The coins received and examined so far all have additional bag marks and handling to deflect suspicion that the piece is counterfeit.

Counterfeit Cuba 1915 Silver Peso
Diagnostics Circled in Red
Click image to enlarge.

While poor quality counterfeit Cuban peso coins have been produced and sold at flea markets for years, this is the first high quality counterfeit of the Cuban 1915 Silver Peso we have encountered. With a catalog value in Krause of $1,200 in UNC and $8,500 in BU, a counterfeiter can profit greatly from producing a deceptive product. We continue to urge collectors that if you are unsure as to authenticity, buy a certified coin from a reputable third-party grading company. It's better than learning an expensive lesson from buying a counterfeit.

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United States

From the NGC Archives: 1858 Copper and Nickel Pattern Cent

Posted on 5/13/2014

The small copper and nickel cent was introduced in 1857 to replace the large, pure copper pieces. It was an immediate success, although its Flying Eagle design did not strike up well.

Chief Engraver James B. Longacre created the Indian Head type specifically to address this concern, and it appeared on numerous pattern issues of 1858.

These pattern cents quickly came to the attention of coin collectors, whose numbers were rapidly growing. Mint Director James R. Snowden had 12-piece sets assembled and offered for sale to satisfy this demand. The variety illustrated in this specimen features a rounded point to Liberty's bust, as adopted in 1860, suggesting that it may have been coined after the date it bears. A choice proof, this lovely cent was struck with a reverse die that has five-leaf clusters and which was quite heavily polished. Well struck, this pattern has bright surfaces and attractive toning of golden brown.

Are you interested in learning more about these coins? Click here to visit the NGC Coin Explorer and read on.

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United States

Conservation Showcase: 1913 Type 1 Buffalo 5 Cent

Posted on 5/13/2014

Storage in a holder with PVC caused this coin to be covered in a green sludge. Thanks to NCS conservation, the coin was able to grade numerically with NGC.

BEFORE CONSERVATION

click to enlarge

click to enlarge

AFTER CONSERVATION

click to enlarge

click to enlarge

Nearly every experienced numismatist has a horror story about coins and PVC. PVC plasticizer is a chemical used in the production of the plastic of some coin holders most notably the so-called soft flips. With the right temperature and humidity this chemical can leach out of the plastic and deposit onto the surface of a coin. With time this residue can cause irreversible environmental damage.

This 1913 Type 1 Buffalo 5 Cent coin was submitted to NCS after spending time in a coin holder containing the plasticizer PVC. The tell tale result is a coin covered in an even green sludge. Typically coins with PVC residue this extensive have certain irreversible damage. Luckily for this nickel the PVC residue only caused minimal damage to the coin surface. Following careful removal of the residue by the professionals at NCS this coins was able to grade numerically with NGC.

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United States

Chinese Coins: And the Winner Is...

Posted by Peter Anthony on 5/13/2014

The China Mints compete with one another to design and strike the Panda coins for each new date.

“Where do Pandas come from?” If we are talking about coins and not bears the catchall answer is usually, “From the China Mint.” This may be enough to satisfy most people but it hardly describes the way that Panda coins are designed and struck. The actual minting process has a bit of drama to it and is far more complicated than most people imagine.

To begin with there is no single China Mint. In China there are three different mints that strike Pandas: the Shanghai Mint, the Shenyang Mint and the Shenzhen Guobao Mint. They are all ultimately under the supervision of the country’s central bank, The People’s Bank of China.

While the Shanghai, Shenyang and Guobao Mints are part of the People’s Bank they have quite a bit of autonomy. It is an interesting paradox that the Mints in China probably have more freedom to experiment with designs than their counterparts in many nations that boast “freer” governments. It is also interesting that the Mints compete with one another to design and strike various coins, including Pandas.

For nearly every Panda date there was a round of competitions held that reminds me a bit of a game show like Wheel of Fortune, or American Idol. Each of the Mints has a variety of artists on its staff. Selected artists at each Mint, say ten, are assigned to develop and submit Panda coin designs. From the many designs each Mint chooses one finalist. This art is then sent to a committee of judges in Beijing. The judges then choose the winning design from among those entries.

The art competition is not the only contest held. There is a similar process for the

engravers who translate the artwork into the three-dimensional objects that we call Panda coins.

I've been told by people from all over the world that they love the coin designs on Pandas. It's an important part of the charm. For 2014, the winning Panda coin design is the work of Mr. Rocky Zhao of the Shanghai Mint. He has told me what an amazing feeling it is to have your art selected as the winner because the quality of all the submissions is so high.

These competitions have been held since the very beginning. In 1981 there was a competition between ten Mint artists to choose the design for the first Panda in 1982. Hundreds of drawings were considered. Ultimately a work from Mr. Chen Jian, who also designed the 1979 Beijing Monument coins and the 1980 Summer Olympic Games archer, was selected. This design was so successful that in 1983 the Mint decided to forgo the contest and gave the commission outright to Mr. Chen. Mr. Chen made many visits to the zoo to observe the Pandas in order to create the 1983 Panda design.

Mr. Chen Jian and some of his coin designs.

So from the very beginning the competitive relationship between the Mints in China has contributed to the very high artistic level typical of Panda coins. That is something that all collectors can appreciate and that has been one of the keys to the series' great popularity.

Peter Anthony is an expert on Chinese modern coins with a particular focus on

Panda coins. He is an analyst for the NGC Chinese Modern Coin Price Guide as well as a consultant on Chinese modern coins.

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United States

Chicago International Coin Fair Auction Results

Posted on 5/13/2014

Sales of ancient coins generated more than $5.25 million at the CICF auction, hosted by Heritage Auctions.

[DALLAS, TX] — This was our biggest-ever offering of Ancient coins and the results, thanks to you, our devoted clientele, were little short of spectacular! Heritage sold more than 1,800 Ancient coins in this, our most successful CICF auction to date, generating more than $5.25 million, as part of an immense offering of nearly 6,000 Ancient and World coins that realized over $15 million. The auction featured three anchor collections: The Andre Constantine Dimitriadis Collection of Greek and Roman gold coins, formed by a Californian of Greek decent from the mid-1980s to early 2000s; the Dr. Patrick Tan Collection of Greek, Judean and Roman Coins, assembled by a prominent Singaporean physician who is one of the most active current collectors of Ancients; and the Lexington Collection, a select and carefully curated holding of gorgeous Greek and Roman coins.

Remarkably, no fewer than five Ancient coins reached or topped $100,000:

A Marc Antony as Triumvir (43-31 BC), AV aureus — one of the highlights of the Andre Constantine Dimitriadis Collection — sold for $141,000. The portrait aureus of the triumvir Marc Antony comes with a distinguished pedigree dating back to the Mazzini Collection in 1957 and is the plate coin of Xavier Calico's standard reference The Roman Aurei.

A Pertinax (AD 193), AV aureus, from the Lexington Collection, featuring a rare visage of the short-lived Roman emperor, sold for $129,250.

Another coin from the Lexington Collection,

an Augustus (27 BC-AD 14), AV aureus, sold for $111,625. The beautiful coin displays Capricorn on the reverse, the natal sign of Rome's first emperor.

While Roman gold took much of the spotlight, an impressive Roman bronze sestertius of Titus (AD 79-81), displaying an obverse image of the famous Colosseum that still stands in Rome, realized $105,750. This was a standout example from the Dr. Patrick Tan Collection, one of the CICF sales anchor collections.

Another Lexington Collection Roman aureus of the Imperatorial era, of the assassin C. Cassius Longinus, brought just a whisker under the century mark, achieving $99,875 including the 17.5% buyer's premium.

Bidding was furious in all categories, as a substantial crowd on the floor competed with a strong "book" of advance bids and a vast internet audience following the sale via HeritageLive.

Heritage will offer the Byzantine portion of the Andre Constantine Dimitriadis Collection, more than 800 coins, in our fall auction of World and Ancient Coins in New York City, Sept. 17-19.

This is a guest article. The thoughts and opinions in the piece are those of their author and are not necessarily the thoughts of the Certified Collectibles Group.

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ANA Announces Coin Recovery from 2007 Museum Theft

Posted on 5/13/2014

An 1863 US Indian Cent Pattern has been recovered seven years after its 2007 theft from the Edward C. Rochette Money Museum. Collectors who may have bought other stolen coins are encouraged to contact the ANA.

[COLORADO SPRINGS, CO] — The American Numismatic Association has recovered a coin that was stolen in 2007 from the Edward C. Rochette Money Museum: an 1863 US Indian Cent Pattern.

The 1863 US Indian Cent Pattern Judd 302 is graded Pr-66CA. It was returned to the ANA by a collector who wishes to remain anonymous.

“We are thrilled to have this coin back where it belongs — in the Money Museum’s collection,” said ANA Executive Director Kimberly Kiick. “We encourage collectors who may have purchased coins that are missing from the museum collection to be a part of the ANA’s recovery process.”

Coin recovery efforts continue

The recent recovery stems from the ANA’s collaboration with various law enforcement agencies and specifically targeted recovery efforts. As part of the ongoing recovery efforts, the ANA has released reorganized lists of missing and recovered coins from the Money Museum at www.Money.org/CoinRecovery. Collectors who believe they may be in possession of a stolen coin are encouraged to contact the ANA. The ANA may, at its discretion, offer reimbursement for stolen artifacts, which will not exceed the purchase price of the coin.

“Our goal has always been to recover all of the artifacts missing from the Money Museum, but we also want to be fair to the collectors who unknowingly purchased stolen coins,” said ANA Vice President Jeff Garrett. “We don’t want to victimize those collectors who purchased a coin in good faith. We want to work with them to

come to an agreeable solution to all parties. We hope that our reorganized lists will enable the numismatic community to more easily review their collection and determine whether they are in possession of the ANA's missing coins."

The ANA has received insurance funds to help with recovery efforts.

Anyone with information about the stolen coins from the Money Museum is encouraged to call 719-482-9841 or email Garrett@money.org.

The American Numismatic Association is a congressionally chartered nonprofit educational organization dedicated to encouraging people to study and collect money and related items. The ANA helps its 25,500 members and the public discover and explore the world of money through its vast array of education and outreach programs, as well as its museum, library, publications, conventions and seminars. For more information, call 719-632-2646 or go to www.money.org.

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Stack's Bowers Galleries Congratulates Frank Van Valen

Posted on 5/7/2014

Numismatist Frank Van Valen is celebrating 25 years as a Red Book *contributor.*

[IRVINE, Calif.] — Stack's Bowers Galleries is pleased to congratulate numismatic cataloger Frank Van Valen as he celebrates 25 years as a contributor to what is known as the most famous and most referenced book in all of numismatics — *A Guide Book of United States Coins: The Official Red Book*.

Referred to in the numismatic community as simply the *Red Book*, this reference guide has been described as a must for anyone collecting or selling coins. Published annually since 1947, the book is frequently used by all collectors, both new and experienced. "When David Bowers invited me to be a part of the company's *Red Book* research team in the fall of 1990, I jumped at the opportunity," said Van Valen. "I bought my first *Red Book* in 1961, and I still own it. As an 11-year-old collector in 1961, I could only dream about one day seeing my name in print as a contributor, and now, I've seen it there for 25 consecutive years!"

Van Valen began his career with Stack's Bowers Galleries in 1987. Widely praised for over two decades for his numismatic expertise, his byline has appeared in some of the most important auction catalogs ever written, in addition to the last 25 editions of *A Guide Book of United States Coins: The Official Red Book*.

Van Valen can be reached at the Stack's Bowers Galleries Wolfeboro, New Hampshire office, and is available to discuss consigning to one of the firm's many numismatic auctions, or to assist with the outright sale of a collection. To reach Van Valen, or any member of the Stack's Bowers Galleries team, please call 800.458.4646 (West Coast), 800.566.2580 (East Coast), or email info@stacksbowers.com.

About Stack’s Bowers Galleries

Stack’s Bowers Galleries conducts live, Internet and specialized auctions of rare U.S. and world coins and currency and ancient coins, as well as direct sales through retail and wholesale channels. The company’s 80-year legacy includes the cataloging and sale of many of the most valuable United States coin and currency collections to ever cross an auction block — The John J. Ford, Jr. Collection, The Louis E. Eliasberg, Sr. Collection, The Harry W. Bass, Jr. Collection, The Norweb Collection, The Cardinal Collection and The Battle Born Collection — to name just a few. World coin and currency collections include The Louis E. Eliasberg, Sr. Collection of World Gold Coins, The Kroisos Collection, The Alicia and Sidney Belzberg Collection, The Wa She Wong Collection, The Guia Collection, The Thos. H. Law Collection, and The Robert O. Ebert Collection.

The company is headquartered in Irvine, California, with offices in New York, Wolfeboro, Hong Kong, and Paris. Stack’s Bowers Galleries is the Official Auctioneer for several important numismatic conventions, including American Numismatic Association events, the New York International Numismatic Convention, the Professional Numismatists Guild New York Invitational, the Whitman Coin & Collectibles Spring, Summer and Winter Expos, and our April and August Hong Kong Auctions.

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